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February 4, 1943

Your Majesty (written in longhand)

I am happy to tell you that I have safely returned to the White House and that I have given your very wonderful gifts to Mrs. Roosevelt. She is delighted with them, and with their beautiful workmanship and design. They will form a most interesting part of our family collections, and I want you to know how grateful I am.

Also, may I tell you what a very great pleasure it was to meet you at Casablanca and that I much hope that we can meet again soon. There are many things in regard to the future which I should like to talk over with you. I hope much that you will be able to visit me in Washington just as soon as this dreadful war is over, and that you will bring with you your fine son, the Crown Prince.

I have been much impressed with the beauties and with the future that undoubtedly lies before Morocco. In its development I feel sure that you can count on the truly unselfish aid from the people of the United States.

Believe me, Sir,

Your true friend (written in longhand)

Franklin D. Roosevelt

P. S. May I take this occasion to send my warm regards to H.R.H. the Crown Prince, and to your Grand Vizier, and to your Chef de Protocol? (written in longhand)

His Sherifian Majesty,
Sidi Mohammed,
Sultan of Morocco

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State Dept. review completed

July 19, 1955

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FROM : AF - []

Attached is the letter of February 4, 1943 from President Roosevelt to the Sultan of Morocco, along with copies of several other documents which are of interest in connection with the letter. The photostat from which the copy of the letter was typed is accompanied by a certificate from the Archivist of the United States that it is a true copy of the original in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.

I am also sending along to you copies of an exchange of letters between President Roosevelt and the Sultan of Morocco which took place in November 1942. I have a hunch that the Roosevelt letter in this exchange is the letter to which President Eisenhower has had reference.

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(Translation
AF:MQ:hcb
2/13/48)

Copied from LA PRESSE MAROCAINE, January 18, 1948.

ROOSEVELT DID NOT PROMISE THE INDEPENDENCE OF MOROCCO
to His Majesty the Sultan

PARIS, January 17.--Maurice Ferro, special correspondent of the "Monde" in Washington, cabled his paper the following information:

The alleged promises of independence which Roosevelt is purported to have made in 1943 to the Sultan of Morocco are beginning to assume the aspect of a "seasonal" argument--such is the impression which may be gained from political circles in Washington.

It is emphasized that a clarification of this matter had immediately brought Abdel Rahaman Azzam to his senses after his very arbitrary statements of last June. It is also pointed out that the plans of the Secretary General of the Arab League surprised the Secretariat of State due to their sharp contrast with the restraint which Azzam Pasha had shown in the course of the interview which General Marshall had granted him several days before.

It is pointed out also that Shereefian policy would be in error if it founded on these "promises" its spectacular demands. We have been told in authorized circles that one would search in vain for any evidence (of such promises) in the official files. There exists absolutely no document relating to the famous promises of Casablanca. The statement is emphatic and requires no comments.

The interest which the United States has shown in affairs of the Middle East and United States intercession between Great Britain and Egypt are aimed at ensuring peace and equilibrium in the Mediterranean. It is felt in Washington that France acquits itself well of this mission in the western section; why then should the United States involve itself in a matter which is purely French?

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DISCUSSIONS AT THE CASABLANCA CONFERENCE RELATING TO
MOROCCAN INDEPENDENCE, AS RECORDED IN AMERICAN SOURCES

Elliott Roosevelt, in As He Saw It, pp. 110-111, records a dinner conversation between President Roosevelt and the Sultan of Morocco on January 22, 1943. The conversation took place in French, apparently without interpreters. The following passage is pertinent:

"The Sultan . . . raised the question of what Father's advice would entail, insofar as the French government of the future was concerned.

"Father . . . remarked . . . that the postwar scene and the prewar scene would, of course, differ sharply, especially as they related to the colonial question."

Robert E. Sherwood, in Roosevelt and Hopkins, pp. 689-690, prints an informal account of the dinner by Harry Hopkins, which contains nothing on the subject of Moroccan independence. The Sherwood account is a slight condensation of the original Hopkins notes in the Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park, but the original notes contain nothing on Moroccan independence either.

On January 23, 1943, Harry Hopkins, accompanied by Brigadier General W. H. Wilbur, had a conversation at Casablanca with the Grand Vizier of Morocco, who was accompanied by the Moroccan Director of Protocol, Si Mammeri. The following extracts from General Wilbur's notes of this conversation (obtained from the Hopkins papers in the Roosevelt Library) are pertinent:

"The Grand Vizier made it clear that the matters to be discussed must be made known only to the President and that no power other than the U.S. should know of the interview.

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"4th Question.

"The Sultan is certain that the war will end in a victory for the U.S. This victory will be followed by a treaty of peace. When the time arrives to discuss the conditions of the peace it is the Sultan's intention to throw himself in the arms of Mr. Roosevelt. Provided Mr. Roosevelt will accept him and his country.

"If Mr. Roosevelt accepts the Sultan proposes to hold a plebescite of his people. The Sultan is certain that all his people both in French and Spanish Morocco will be in agreement and wish to place their future in Mr. Roosevelt's hands.

"The Grand Vizier stated that this last subject was one concerning which he requested that absolute secrecy be maintained, that he desired that it be presented only to Mr. Roosevelt. Mr. Hopkins stated that it would be for Mr. Roosevelt's ears alone.

"Mr. Hopkins stated that he could make a general reply now as he is thoroughly familiar with Mr. Roosevelt's views.

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"The President feels that there is no reason to change the present government of Morocco and has no intention of forcing other changes on any people."

A rapid check of Department of State files turned up no additional information with respect to discussions of this subject at Casablanca.

P.HD: 7-15-55

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FOR THE PRESS

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 23, 1942

The President has sent the following message to His Majesty, Sidi Mohammed, Sultan of Morocco:

Your Majesty:

I have been highly pleased to learn of the admirable spirit of cooperation that is animating you and your people in their relationships with the French Administration and with the forces of my country. This is particularly pleasing to me because our traditional friendship dates from the time of George Washington, the first President of the United States of America, to whom your noble predecessor gave, as a mark of personal affection, the building which houses the American Legation in Tangier. Today the Axis powers are foes of both our countries. This foe seeks to impose on North Africa a scheme of military and political domination. His lust for booty has reached into every phase of Moroccan life. I consider it fortunate that we are bound together in a common effort toward his destruction.

Our victory over the Germans and Italians will, I know, inaugurate a period of peace and prosperity, during which the Moroccan and French people of North Africa will flourish and thrive in a manner which befits their glorious past and be pleasing to God.

May God have Your Majesty in His safe and holy keeping.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT